DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 288 237 EA 019 708

AUTHOR Ritchie, Robert; And Others
TITLE The Catholic Schools of Belmont County: An Organizational Analysis.
INSTITUTION Dayton Univ., Ohio. Office of Educational Services.
SPONS AGENCY Steubenville Diocese, OH. Office of Education.
PUB DATE May 87
NOTE 55p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Catholic Schools; *Communication (Thought Transfer); *Declining Enrollment; Elementary Secondary Education; Family Size; Population Trends; *School Demography; *School District Reorganization
IDENTIFIERS *Ohio (Belmont County)

ABSTRACT

The Catholic Schools of Belmont County, Ohio, like many other public and parochial schools, have experienced declining enrollments over the past few years. The causes may be attributed to declining family size and to economic factors affecting the area. The paper describes a study of Belmont County's five Catholic schools undertaken by the Office of Educational Services at the Diocese's request. The study provides data for help in decisions affecting these schools' future. Following an introductory chapter, the report presents demographic information in chapter II. The county shows a general population decline. Two elementary schools show only a slight decline, while two others have declined dramatically since 1979. The high school's enrollment has declined and will continue to do so. Chapter III reviews facilities and miscellaneous items pertinent to the study. Chapter IV contains consultants' conclusions and recommendations. After addressing some Ohio Department of Education concerns about auxiliary services, transportation, school charters, and teacher certification, the study recommends that (1) the schools continue under their present organizational structure; (2) the low enrollments of St. Mary and St. Joseph be assigned highest priority by the schools' supporting parishes; (3) St. Mary Central address its accommodation problem carefully; (4) more dialogue be promoted among the schools; and (5) pastors and school administrators be given this report. Appended are the minutes of meetings with pastors and school officials. (MLH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED288237

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Herman Torge

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

THE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OF BELMONT COUNTY:

AN ORGANIZATIONAL ANALYSIS

presented to the

Superintendent of Schools
Steubenville Diocese

by

The Office of Educational Services
University of Dayton

May 1987

EA 019 708

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I	INTRODUCTION	1
II	ENROLLMENT ANALYSIS	3
III	SCHOOL SITE VISITATIONS	16
IV	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	29
	APPENDIX	38

STEUBENVILLE DIOCESE
MOST REVEREND ALBERT H. OTTENWEILER, BISHOP

Office of Education, Father Gene W. Mullett,
Acting Superintendent

St. John Elementary: Bellaire, Ohio
Alex Kosky, Principal

St. Joseph Elementary: Bridgeport, Ohio
Jeanne Howell, Principal

St. Mary Elementary: St. Clairsville, Ohio
Ronald Sass, Principal

St. Mary Central Elementary: Martin's Ferry, Ohio
Sr. Louise Smith, Principal

St. John Central High School: Bellaire, Ohio
Reverend Robert Gallagher, Principal

UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON
OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

Robert Ritchie
Herman Torge
Kenneth Crim

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Belmont County lies in the southeastern section of Ohio. The eastern boundary of the county is the Ohio River. A part of the Steubenville Diocese, Belmont County currently has five Catholic schools, located in the eastern part of the county which is also the location of the primary population centers of the area. The schools include:

St. John, Bellaire, Ohio, a K-8 elementary school.

St. John Central, Bellaire, Ohio, a 9-12 high school.

St. Joseph, Bridgeport, Ohio, a 1-8 elementary school.

St. Mary, St. Clairsville, Ohio, a 1-8 elementary school.

St. Mary Central, Martins Ferry, Ohio, a K-8 elementary school.

These schools, like many others both Catholic and public, have had some declines in enrollments over the past few years. These declines have been more severe for some than for others. The causes, again, are several but would mainly appear to be attributed to the general decline of family size similar to that over much of the nation, and to economic factors which have affected the area.

Therefore, the Diocese initiated discussions concerning the schools and possible solutions. As a result, the Office of Educational Services was asked to conduct a study of these

schools. The purpose for this study was to provide data to the Diocese so that decisions concerning these schools can be made by those who have that responsibility.

Following this introductory chapter the report will present demographic information in Chapter II, a review of the facilities in Chapter III, and a Chapter on miscellaneous items pertinent to the study. The report concludes with Chapter V which contains recommendations from the consultants. These recommendations are presented from the point of view of the consultants. Final decisions will eventually need to come from those who have that responsibility.

The consultants wish to thank all those who assisted them, teachers, principals, pastors, members of school boards, and the superintendent. We appreciate your cooperation.

CHAPTER II

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT ANALYSIS

Since a major reason for the current study is a concern over the school enrollments, an analysis of general population and enrollments for Belmont County is most appropriate. The most optimistic description could be summarized by the work "stabilization" but a more realistic view might be a continued decline for the short term.

Table 1 presents data from the most recent census updates for Belmont County and those governmental units within the county which the Bureau of Census recognizes. From 1980 to 1984 the county as a whole is estimated to have declined about 1.0 percent. Only St. Clairsville and Shadyside show any increases.

Table 2 gives a brief history of the number of births and the rates per thousand population for selected years since 1960. Prior to 1960 the numbers had shown a steady increase but then did a considerable reversal to the year 1980. The county as a whole showed a decline in the number of births of 38.8 percent from 1960 to 1980. Bellaire City was even more. Since 1980 the numbers have fluctuated up and down with no real pattern, perhaps indicating a plateau.

The public schools in the county reflect the data as presented by the census and vital statistics. For those

districts where data are available, enrollments have all shown a decline for the period 1978 to 1986. These enrollments are projected to continue their decline over the next few years (See Table 3).

The enrollment projections as shown in Table 3 and in Tables 4 through 8 (at the end of this chapter) were calculated using the cohort survival ratio. This method determines the percent of students who are in the school in October that were enrolled in the next lower grade the previous year. (For example, if 97 students are in school in the fifth grade in October from a fourth grade class of 100 students the previous year, this is a survival ratio of 97 percent.) These ratios between grades are calculated and averaged for a number of years. This average is used to predict future enrollments from current actual enrollments. Adjustments are occasionally made for extreme, one time fluctuations.

The cohort survival ratio projection is based on the assumption that future trends will be similar to those of the past. This, of course, is a weakness in the method. Economic and social conditions of the past may not continue; on the other hand others may arise. Yet this method does give some indication of what the future holds.

Enrollment data, past, present, and future, are given in detail for the five Catholic schools at the end of this chapter. Included are the survival ratios for each grade. A summary of

these data is shown in Figure 1. The figure shows the total actual school enrollment for the years 1979 and 1980. The projected 1992 enrollment also appears. St. John and St. Mary Central, after showing some decline from 1979 to 1986 appear to stabilize and even show a slight increase over the next five years. St. Joseph and St. Mary show a drastic decline from 1979 to the present, St. Mary dropping by over fifty percent. It is projected that neither school will have much over one hundred students by 1992. It should be noted in Table 7 that St. Mary's projected enrollment is based on a first grade enrollment of 17 to 20 students. The current first grade enrollment of 6 is thought to be atypical. If the current first grade enrollment is typical then the future of the school is in jeopardy.

St. John Central High School, like all Catholic high schools, is dependent upon its feeder schools. The effects of the declining elementary enrollments will be noticed for a number of years. Conversely, an increase in elementary enrollment will generally be slow in appearing at the high school level. St. John Central has had a 27 percent decline since 1979, a decline which will almost certainly continue since its future enrollment is already in the lower grades. Table 8 shows the steady decline of Grade 8 students in the elementary schools. This, along with the low survival ratio from Grade 8 to Grade 9, predict a continuing decline in enrollment for this school if past conditions continue.

Summary

An analysis of the demographics for Belmont County shows a general population decline. Births the past few years have held steady; whether this will continue remains to be seen. Public school enrollments have declined and are projected to continue in this manner but perhaps at a lesser rate. The Catholic schools have also shown a decrease but this varies from school to school. St. John and St. Mary Central have declined only slightly and are predicted to hold steady. This is remarkable considering the decline in the public schools of that area. St. Joseph and St. Mary declined rather dramatically since 1979 (St. Mary especially the last three years). Although it is predicted this will slow down or hold steady, much depends on future entering enrollments. St. John Central High School enrollments have declined and will continue to do so. This resulting from elementary enrollment losses the past few years.

TABLE 1
POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS: BELMONT COUNTY
1980-1984

	1980	1984 (Est.)	Change	% of Change
Belmont County	82,569	81,759	-810	-1.0%
Bellaire City	8,241	8,037	-204	-2.5%
Bridgeport	2,642	2,530	-112	-4.2%
Martins Ferry	9,331	9,183	-148	-1.6%
St. Clairsville	5,452	5,683	231	4.2%
Shadyside	4,315	4,348	33	.8%

Source: U.S. Census Update 1986

TABLE 2
BIRTHS: NUMBER AND RATE PER 1000 POPULATION
BELMONT COUNTY AND SUBDIVISIONS
SELECTED YEARS

School Year	Belmont County		Bellaire City		Martins Ferry		St. Clairsville City	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
1960	1,662	19.8	244	21.2	206	17.3		
1970	1,216	15.0	153	15.8	183	17.0		
1980	1,017	12.3	96	11.6	130	13.9	(Not separate until 1982)	
1981	1,073	13.0	107	13.0	122	13.1		
1982	1,101	13.3	111	13.5	124	13.3	54	9.9
1983	1,108	13.4	116	14.1	145	15.5	64	11.7
1984	978	11.8	110	13.3	136	14.6	63	11.6
1985	1.013	12.3	139	16.9	111	11.9	85	15.6

Source: Ohio Department of Health; February 1987.

TABLE 3
ENROLLMENTS AND PROJECTIONS
SELECTED PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS
BELMONT COUNTY

School Year	Bellaire City	Martins Ferry*	St. Clairsville	Shadyside	Bridgeport
1978	2,982	2,169	2,618	1,157	1,352
1980	2,750	2,047	2,405	1,033	1,306
1982	2,546	1,947	2,319	957	1,277
1984	2,450	1,899	2,251	926	1,292
1986	2,261	1,778	2,163	892	1,189
		Projected Enrollments			
1988		1,690	2,021	883	1,164
1990		1,592	1,871	881	1,115
1992		1,538		900	1,080

*Does not include JVS, LD, DH

Source: Enrollments courtesy of the school district.
Projections of St. Clairsville courtesy of the school district.
Projections of Martin's Ferry, Shadyside, and Bridgeport by the Office of Educational Services

FIGURE 1

ENROLLMENT COMPARISONS
BELMONT COUNTY CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

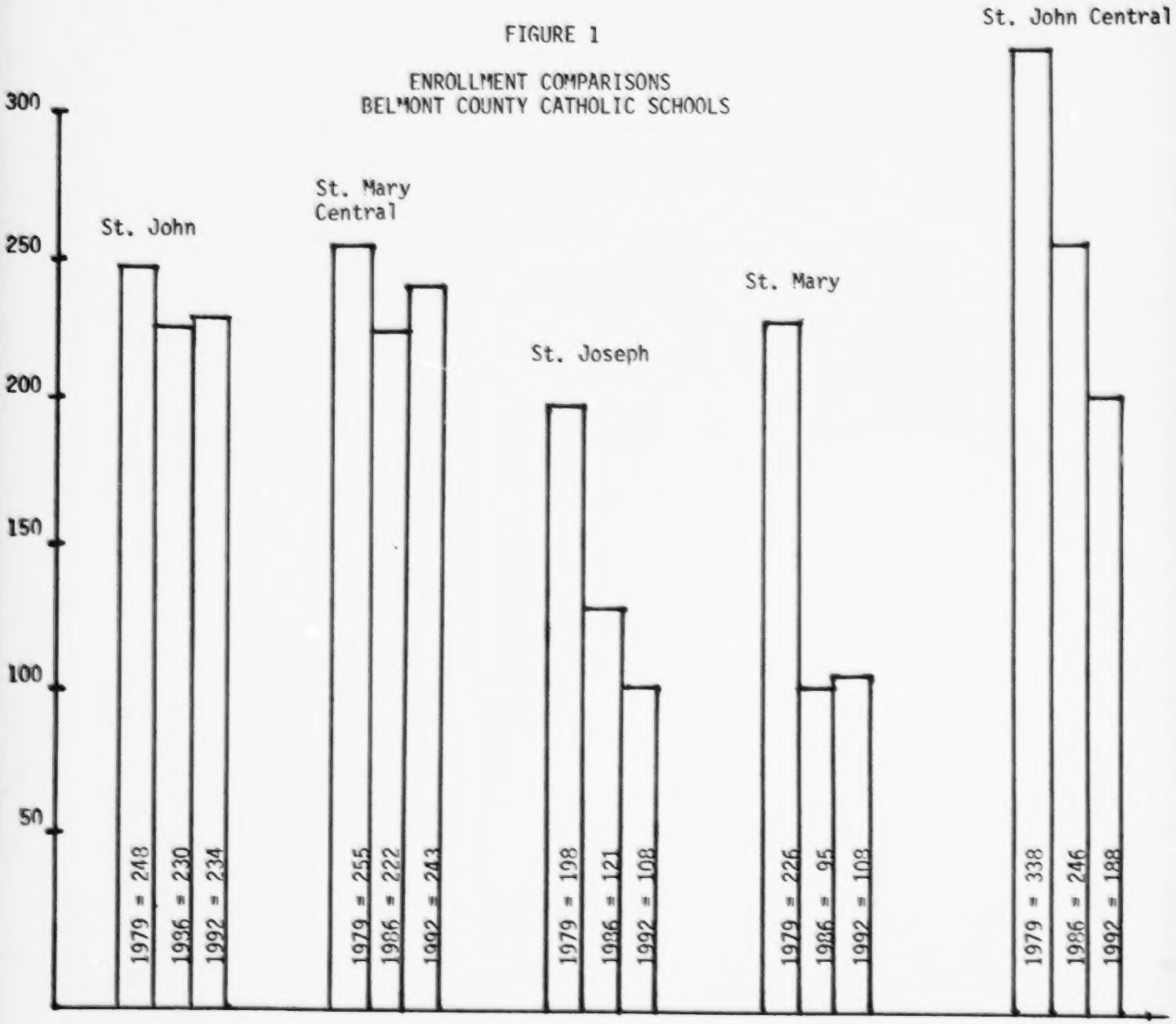

TABLE 4
ST. JOHN SCHOOL
ENROLLMENTS 1979-1992

Year	K	Gr. 1	Gr. 2	Gr. 3	Gr. 4	Gr. 5	Gr. 6	Gr. 7	Gr. 8	Total
1979-80	24	28	29	33	24	31	32	24	23	248
1980-81	23	23	25	27	31	23	31	32	24	239
1981-82	25	20	22	28	28	35	21	30	31	240
1982-83	35	26	20	23	25	27	35	21	30	242
1983-84	32	36	23	21	22	27	27	35	21	244
1984-85	27	32	34	23	20	21	25	26	32	240
1985-86	26	28	33	29	25	20	21	24	24	230
1986-87	30	26	26	34	27	24	20	21	22	230
Surv. Ratio		.9948	.9982	.9946	.9674	1.0114	.9783	.9844	.9853	
PROJECTED										
1987	28	30	25	26	33	27	24	20	20	233
1988	28	28	28	25	25	33	26	24	19	236
1989	28	28	27	28	24	25	32	26	23	241
1990	28	28	27	27	27	24	24	32	25	242
1991	28	28	27	27	26	27	23	24	31	241
1992	28	28	27	27	26	26	26	23	23	234

TABLE 5
ST. MARY SCHOOL: MARTINS FERRY
ENROLLMENTS 1979-1992

Year	K	Gr. 1	Gr. 2	Gr. 3	Gr. 4	Gr. 5	Gr. 6	Gr. 7	Gr. 8	Total
1979-80	14	16	23	30	36	36	30	31	39	255
1980-81	29	14	14	20	25	32	34	27	28	223
1981-82	28	29	16	14	16	22	31	31	23	210
1982-83	28	25	29	13	15	17	23	31	27	208
1983-84	24	30	24	29	15	15	14	22	28	201
1984-85	34	25	33	24	26	16	14	14	24	210
1985-86	34	33	24	27	24	26	15	14	15	212
1986-87	31	36	31	25	23	26	25	12	13	222
Surv. Ratio		1.0212	.9942	.9325	.9172	.9809	.9512	.9379	.9325	
PROJECTED										
1987	30	32	36	29	23	23	25	23	11	232
1988	29	31	32	34	27	23	22	23	21	242
1989	30	30	31	30	31	26	22	21	21	242
1990	29	31	30	29	28	30	25	21	19	242
1991	30	30	31	28	27	27	29	23	19	244
1992	29	29	30	29	26	26	26	27	21	243

TABLE 6
ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL
ENROLLMENTS 1979-1992

Year	K	Gr. 1	Gr. 2	Gr. 3	Gr. 4	Gr. 5	Gr. 6	Gr. 7	Gr. 8	Total
1979-80		21	21	25	27	22	29	29	24	198
1980-81		24	19	22	26	25	22	28	30	196
1981-82		19	25	19	18	27	24	21	25	178
1982-83		20	19	23	18	17	27	20	21	165
1983-84		18	19	19	23	20	17	26	20	162
1984-85		16	18	16	14	17	19	10	23	133
1985-86		16	17	18	17	14	14	18	10	124
1986-87		12	16	15	18	16	12	14	18	121
Surv. Ratio		.9925	.9565	.9437	.9510	.9507	.9013	.9672		
PROJECTED										
1987		16	16	14	14	17	15	11	14	117
1988		16	16	15	13	14	16	14	11	115
1989		16	16	15	14	12	13	15	14	118
1990		16	16	15	14	13	12	12	14	112
1991		16	16	15	14	13	12	11	11	109
1992		16	16	15	14	13	12	11	11	108

TABLE 7
ST. MARY SCHOOL: ST. CLAIRSVILLE
ENROLLMENTS 1979-1992

Year	K	Gr. 1	Gr. 2	Gr. 3	Gr. 4	Gr. 5	Gr. 6	Gr. 7	Gr. 8	Total
1979-80		28	27	35	25	34	23	26	28	226
1980-81		28	28	28	29	24	33	20	24	214
1981-82		23	23	30	27	26	26	27	19	201
1982-83		22	25	21	29	27	22	25	25	196
1983-84		26	17	19	16	20	17	11	22	148
1984-85		13	22	14	17	15	13	16	9	119
1985-86		21	7	19	11	10	16	12	11	107
1986-87		6	19	7	14	12	10	15	12	95
Surv. Ratio		.8758	.9262	.8614	.8701	.8782	.8400	.8905		
PROJECTED										
1987		17	5	18	6	12	11	9	11	89
1988		20	15	5	16	6	11	10	9	92
1989		20	18	14	5	14	6	10	10	97
1990		20	18	17	12	5	12	6	10	100
1991		20	18	17	15	11	5	11	6	103
1992		20	18	17	15	13	11	5	11	110

TABLE 8
ST. JOHN CENTRAL
ENROLLMENTS 1979-1992

Year	Gr. 8	Gr. 9	Gr. 10	Gr. 11	Gr. 12	Total
1979-80	114	77	88	95	78	338
1980-81	106	74	75	88	90	327
1981-82	98	73	70	74	84	301
1982-83	103	74	67	70	74	285
1983-84	91	73	71	64	70	278
1984-85	88	64	67	68	63	262
1985-86	60	66	63	64	66	259
1986-87	65	53	66	64	63	246
Surv. Ratio		.7485	.9561	.9820	.9751	
PROJECTED						
1987	56	49	51	65	62	227
1988	60	42	47	50	63	202
1989	69	45	40	46	49	180
1990	68	52	43	39	45	179
1991	68	51	48	42	38	179
1992	66	51	49	47	41	188

CHAPTER III

SCHOOL SITE VISITATIONS

Each of the Catholic school buildings in Belmont County was visited over a two day period in early April. Two things were accomplished during the visit. One, a brief tour of the building was taken, accompanied by the principal. The purpose was to take a look at the facilities as currently used and to view the building for its potential for other uses. Second, time was taken to interview the building principal on a wide variety of topics concerning the school and its future.

St. Mary School: St. Clairsville

St. Mary is located on W. Main Street outside the main part of the downtown area. It is located on a small, restricted but adequate site. Some parking and a small playground is located at the rear of the school. The church is located to the east of the school with an intervening residence structure separating the two.

The school is a modern structure, uniquely designed. Rooms are quite spacious. There are eight classrooms, each attractive and well lighted. Capacity for each classroom is above 30 per room. The rooms are in three clusters around a small central multipurpose room. This room is used at lunch time and for a variety of other activities. It is not large enough for any type

of upper elementary pupil sports program. The school has no lunch program; students "brown bag" it.

Currently, four rooms are used as clasrooms, each housing a double grade. One room is being used by the "School of Hope." The others are used for a variety of purposes. Thus, the school could easily accommodate 200-250 students in the classrooms. An enrollment that high would tax the playground and multipurpose area. But, it is doubtful whether the school as it is currently organized will ever see that many students.

The school currently enrolls 93 students from three parishes as follows:

St. Clairsville	82
Fairpoint	3
Maynard	3
Other parish	2
Non Catholic	3

Tuition for the school is $800 per family from the three supporting parishes. Non parish and non Catholic tuition is higher. Additional parish support comes in the form of an assessment. This assessment is based on the ability of the parish to pay rather than on the pupils attending and is worked out by the cooperating pastors.

The 1985-86 budget showed tuition accounted for 44% and parish assessment accounted for 48% of total revenues. Thus, the school operates primarily on tuition assessments, and some

miscellaneous revenues. Fund raisers appear to be minimal.

The raising of the tuition to $800 several years ago was thought to have caused a severe drop in enrollment. Although the principal indicated that no one is refused because of inability to pay, it is not clear how this is handled nor how many are involved. It was not certain, also, how many students from the parishes are attending public schools.

The school initiated kindergarten for the 1987-88 school year in hopes of increasing enrollment. Eleven are registered. Of the 12 students in grade eight, 8 have registered for St. John Central High School.

St. Mary is an attractive school, faced with a serious enrollment problem.

St. Joseph School: Bridgeport

St. Joseph School is located on National Road in Bridgeport. While this is the mailing address, the location is commonly referred to as Wolfhurst. The site, located on the north side of the road moves rapidly uphill. The building is "L" shaped with a play area within the two sides. Adjacent and on a higher level is the rectory and parking for faculty.

The school is a modern structure, the east-west wing and part of the north-south having been built earlier. An eleven room addition was added at a later date. The north-south wing has the office area, library, and gymnasium which also serves as the food service area. In addition, the gymnasium is heavily

used by the parish for its social and fund raising activities.

The classroom wing has a room for each grade, including kindergarten. In addition, other rooms have special uses, e.g., AV room, faculty workroom, reading instruction, computer room, typing room, nurses room, art room, and science room. All rooms are adequate classroom size, about 31' by 31', able to accommodate 25-30 students. There is an excellent library. The gymnasium is of good size able to be used for the sports program, food service and church activities. The uses made of the various rooms attests to the comprehensive nature of the program.

The current enrollment of the school is 127 students, including seven kindergarten. These students come from four parishes. At the end of the last school year the 124 students attending there were distributed as follows:

St. Anthony, Bridgeport	52
All Saints, Blaine	16
Our Lady of Angels, Parton	7
St. Joseph, Bridgeport	49

For the present school year only one non Catholic is enrolled.

Tuition for those from the affiliated parishes is $600 per family including the newly founded kindergarten. For the 1985-86 fiscal year tuition provided less than 20% of the total receipts. Parish assessment contributed almost 70%. Parish assessment is based not on the students attending but by an agreement worked out by the four pastors involved. The school (through its

parishes) is heavily involved in fund raising to supplement the budget.

St. Joseph initiated kindergarten this year with an enrollment of seven. This is an all day, every day program. Tuition is the same as for all grades and is a part of the cost per family. In other words, the $600 per family cost is inclusive of grades K-8. The initiation of kindergarten had as its purpose, enrolling students at that age instead of in the public school where they then had to be moved back to the Catholic school for grade one. Registration for kindergarten for September 1987 stands at 22, a very hopeful sign.

An analysis of enrollment (see Chapter II) shows a small steady decline since 1979 except for one year. The 1984 school year saw an 18% drop (29). At that time a rumor apparently circulated concerning school reorganization. The school has not recovered from that decline.

St. Joseph is an excellent school building which houses a broad elementary program. It is faced with a problem of declinng enrollment, a problem it apparently is attempting to resolve through its kindergarten.

St. John School: Bellaire

St. John is located at 37th and Guernsey Streets in Bellaire. The site is extremely restricted, the building occupying the entire area. St. John Church is located across 37th Street and St. John Central High School is directly across

Guernsey Street.

The building is quite old having at one time served as the church as well as the school. The brick structure has had several renovations. Inside the building there are 10 classrooms, nine of which house the K-8 program, one room for each grade. It is a three-story structure, classrooms are located on either side of a central hall. The rooms are adequate in size as classrooms. In addition, there is a library (one and one-half classroom in size), curriculum material storage and office space.

There are no facilities for physical activities. The building has no food service. Food service is handled in the church basement. There is no play area for the building.

The school enrollment stands at 230 including kindergarten. This number has fluctuated little the past 10 years. Average class size stands at 25.5. The building could not absorb much increase in enrollment other than a few additional students per grade.

Five parishes provide students and support for the school. The primary feeders for the school are St. John and the parish at Neffs (Sacred Heart). The other parishes include St. Michael in Bellaire, St. Mary at Shadyside, and St. John Vianney at Powhatan Point which is farthest distant. Tuition is $525 per family which includes the kindergarten, operated all day on an alternate day basis. Parish assessment is determined by the

pastors. The proportion of revenues from tuition and assessment is unknown since no financial report was available.

St. John is an older building with some problems. It lacks sufficient space for play area, indoor physical activities and is currently near capacity; there is little room for expansion. Use is made occasionally of the high school but scheduling makes it difficult. The school, being near the high school, has a high ratio of high school attendance.

St. Mary Central: Martins Ferry

St. Mary School is located on North 4th Street in Martins Ferry. To the south and adjacent are the rectory and the church. To the north is a Lutheran church. The school has no play area or parking, it occupies the entire site.

The school building has three levels. The layout is essentially square with an addition to the rear. It is of brick and masonry construction showing evidence of maintenance and renovation. The basement houses two classrooms and two restrooms. The first floor contains four classrooms. The upper floor has three classrooms and the library. A portion of the library was partitioned to provide space for the principal. The rooms are of adequate size. The wide halls are also used for some auxillary instruction, e.g., computers. Although an older building it is in good condition.

A multipurpose room is attached to the east side of the building. It serves as an activity area for the school as well

as the food service. A small stage is at one end. At the other end is the kitchen.

Support for the school comes from four parishes and from the tuition of $600 per family. The parishes include St. Mary, St. Joseph, St. Frances, and St. Lucy. In 1986-87 the anticipated revenues were made up of 34% in the form of tuition. Parish assessments included another 37%. Fund raisers accounted for most of the remainder.

Enrollment at the school is currently 222. In 1979 it was 255 and by 1983 it had dropped to 201. Increases have been small but steady since. Kindergarten and lower grade enrollments are strong. In interviews with persons it was related that the decline a few years ago was attributed to the decision to reopen the building at Tiltonsville and transporting some of the grades. This lasted only a short time. Enrollments are currently recovering.

St. Mary Central is an older school but appears to be in good condition. Its current problem is space with no room for expansion. Current first grade enrollment is 36, highest in the last 10 years and several more than the maximum the school has set for itself. Since the seventh and eighth grades have only 25 total, the overall school enrollment will increase.

The school has little recourse in dealing with additional numbers. The only space available is the small stage area which is not suitable. The basement area of the church does offer some

opportunity; it is a large, spacious area but, of course, is used for church activities. Other than that the only solution is to find space off-site.

St. John Central High School: Bellaire

St. John Central is located on Guernsey Street in Bellaire directly across from St. John Elementary School and St. John Church. It is a modern three-story structure of approved materials. The northern section of the building was constructed in 1949 with the southern section added in 1956. The site for the building is quite restricted allowing room only for the building and minimal parking.

The building is in good condition. The interior is bright, clean and provides an excellent educational environment. It has the facilities to offer a wide variety of curricular and cocurricular offerings. In addition, the school has worked out several cooperative arrangements with the local public high school just down the street.

Since students at St. John Central come from the four feeder schools, a total of 17 parishes are represented which include 16 pastors. Support for the school is provided through tuition at $850 per student and a parish assessment. Fund raisers are also an integral part of school revenues.

It certainly is a truism that a Catholic High School is dependent upon its feeder schools for enrollment. Certainly a high school with a weak record will not have a strong appeal to

those in the lower grades but neither can one with an excellent record expect to attract many students from beyond the Catholic elementary schools. The latter seems to be the case currently with St. John Central.

In Chapter II enrollment data show that from 1979 to the current year, available numbers of eighth graders declined 43% from 114 to 65. At the same time high school enrollment declined 27% from 338 to 246. This attests to the holding power of the school. The change in attraction of the high school is shown in the survival ratio from the eighth to the ninth grade. While the average over the past seven years is 74.8%, it has improved remarkably. In 1980 it was 65% and in 1986 it had moved up to 88%. If the high ratio can be maintained, the projections in Chapter II may be pessemistic and enrollments could increase; even more so if elementary enrollments improve.

Group Discussions

During the two-day visit of the various sites, a great many persons were contacted either individually or by groups. Included were:

1. Individual interviews with building principals;
2. A meeting with the principals as a group;
3. A meeting with three pastors from St. Joseph School;
4. A meeting with all pastors, in a group, and associated with the schools; and,
5. A meeting, in a group, of two school board members each of the five schools.

The individual interviews with the building principals were initiated by the consultants as part of the normal procedure for a study of this type. The group discussions were initiated by members of the groups through the superintendent of schools of the diocese. The discussions were informal, conducted in a spirit of openness and good will and gave everybody an opportunity to speak their minds. The following is a brief summary of the discussions.

It became evident very quickly that the decision to conduct a study of the schools came after a decision had been made that the Catholic elementary schools in Belmont County should be reorganized and that this should be on a pattern of three K-6 schools and one 7-8 school. Furthermore, it was observed that

the decision was reached without any apparent consultation with pastors, principals or parents. If there was prior discussion no one was aware of it.

As a result, each group was unhappy that they were not consulted. Each presented their own legitimate reasons as to why they should have been contacted.

In listening to persons speak, it seemed that the decision to reorganize the schools came not from a concern of low enrollments at any one school, but more from the idea that an elementary school had limited its enrollment causing some student(s) to be placed on a waiting list (They were eventually enrolled).

In general, there seemed to be a feeling of concern among the discussants, especially principals and parents, that the purpose of the current study was the presenting of data and recommendations supporting the proposed reorganization. Whether this concern was successfully addressed is not certain.

It was observed by the consultants that of all those who attended no one was happy with the proposed solution. The disadvantages suggested were many, the advantages suggested were few. Parents predicted a considerable exodus should this be implemented. Many questions were raised by all, questions that needed answers prior to decision time.

An interesting side issue of the meeting of school board members surfaced. This meeting, brought on by a perceived

crisis, was the first time in anybody's recollection that the five boards had met together. It became evident early on that this type of meeting should be continued in order to have more dialogue between schools who do have common concerns.

Other Data

Of interest to the reader and pertinent to this report and its findings are summaries of meetings of the Belmont County Pastors (December 2, 1986), Catholic School Principals (December 4, 1986), and St. Joseph Central School Board (January 19, 1987). These are included in the Appendix. A newspaper clipping from the Steubenville Register is included.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

After spending considerable time visiting the school sites, speaking with various persons involved with the schools, and analyzing population data from a variety of sources, the following are conclusions reached by the consultants concerning the Catholic schools in Belmont County.

1. There appears to be considerable interest in the schools. Parents, pastors, and school personnel were quite vocal in expressing their opinions. All indicated that the schools were providing excellent education for the children.

2. In general the school facilities are in good condition. St. Mary, St. Joseph and St. John Central are quite good, being newer buildings. St. John and St. Mary Central are much older and on very restricted sites. However, best use is being made of each building.

3. St. Mary, St. Joseph and St. John Central have had enrollment declines and unless this is reversed and increases affected there will be difficult times ahead.

4. Enrollments at St. John and St. Mary Central have stabilized and even shown occasional slight increases. While some grades have room for a few students, the schools are generally at capacity, providing lower grade enrollments hold

steady. St. Mary Central is short on space for classrooms; St. John has no space for food service and physical activities.

5. Attempts are being made to increase enrollments at St. Mary's and St. Joseph's by way of adding kindergarten. St. Joseph's, going into its second year, shows promise. St. Mary's is just beginning.

6. The schools evidently have a good relationship with the public schools. This became evident many times as pastors, principals and board members commented on transportation and auxillary services provided through the public schools.

7. The five Catholic schools operate independently of each other. Tuition rates vary considerably, teaching materials are different from school to school; salary schedules vary widely. It was noted in a meeting with school board representatives that no one could recall a time when the boards had ever met as a group for particular purposes.

8. The consultants found no one, among all persons contacted, in favor of a reorganization suggesting one 7-8 school. The evidence seems to indicate that this suggestion came forth without prior consultation with others. Some data recommending such a move seemed to have come from a prior study of Catholic elementary schools in Jefferson County.

9. Finally, it appears that the schools are providing the type of education the Catholic community wants. No vocal dissatisfaction was evident. It did not seem to the consultants

that the lack of enrollment in some areas was due to lack of parent satisfaction, but rather to other reasons.

Recommendations

Prior to presenting recommendations, it would probably be helpful to address concerns, heard many times over, relating to those areas in which the State of Ohio Department of Education has an interest.

Auxillary Services are provided to children in a private school through the board of education of the public school district in which the private school is located. These materials, texts, etc., are on loan and do not transfer with students. For example, if a school closes, the materials go back to the public school. If a change in organization is made and grades are transferred, materials provided through the public school remain in the district through which they were provided. However, in the future, auxillary services would continue through the district where students are then located.

Transportation is provided to all students, public and private according to State guidelines. This, in the case of Belmont County, has been done quite well through the cooperation of the public school districts. Any change in organization would necessitate some change in transportation, perhaps involving additional districts if students are transported across more district boundaries. Depending on the plan, riding time for some students might increase. As a last resort, a public school has

the option of declaring the transporting of a student unreasonable and can reimburse the parent the average yearly cost. This requires State approval.

School Charters are currently in effect for St. Mary, St. Mary Central, St. John and St. Joseph as elementary schools. In Ohio, schools are chartered as elementary or secondary. Elementary means any combination of grades one through eight. A seven and eight grade building is an elementary school. A secondary school can include grades seven through twelve. A seventh and eighth grade are classed as secondary if they are in combination with the ninth grade in the educational program or curriculum.

Teacher Certification is similar. Elementary teaching certification is valid for an elementary school. Secondary teachers may teach at the seventh and eighth grade level but only in their subject area. A seventh/eighth grade building is an elementary school and would be served by elementary teachers and administrators.

The recommendations which follow are not in any order of priority. However, since the study was initiated because of a perceived need to reorganize, that issue is addressed first.

1. It is recommended that Catholic schools in Belmont County continue under their present organizational structure. There are a number of reasons for this:

a. Included in the notes of the meeting between the

Belmont County Pastors and the Bishop of the Steubenville Diocese were a number of advantages of 7-8 consolidation attributed to a prior study by the consultants, and advantages as noted by the pastors (See Appendix). These were and are valid. There is no doubt that students in grades seven and eight would gain from such a move, especially those schools currently not having the facilities of St. Joseph. This, of course, is based on the assumption that it would be relatively easy to affect such a change. Such is not the case. If the primary purpose of the reorganization is to provide a solution to a problem that basically stems from a deficiency at the seventh and eighth grade, then the possibility of looking at a 7-8 school should be explored. It is not the feeling among the consultants that this is the case. Therefore, prior to such a solution other avenues should be explored.

b. In the matter reorganizing the present four elementary schools in such a way as to designate one a 7-8 school, there are concerns considerably more difficult to resolve than transportation, auxillary services, etc. Such a move would change completely the school/parish structure. Each elementary school currently has its several supporting parishes that work together to deter-

mine the meeting of the school financial program. By initiating an elementary school (7-8), encompassing all the parishes, the question of tuition, parish assessments, textbooks and the like, become matters of concern to all parishes. Such an elementary school would appear to be very similar in administration to the present high school, <u>except</u> that it is still an elementary school which, up to now, has been aligned with the local parish.

It is the opinion of the consultants that prior to affecting any change involving a transfer of students, other solutions need to be considered first as suggested by recommendations which follow. If, at a later time, it seems feasible that reorganization would benefit the schools, those who have that responsibility should then meet, study, and provide the necessary answers or solutions to all the questions and problems that have been posed. When this has been done, the schools are ready to move in the direction of reorganization because they have the necessary information to sell the idea to their constituents, the parish families.

2. <u>It is recommended</u> the low enrollments of St. Mary and St. Joseph be given a number one priority by the supporting parishes of each school.

a. The pastors of the parishes supporting each of the schools must become <u>active</u> recruiters for the

schools from the pulpit, as they speak to the families of their parishes, and through various parish newsletters. Involving school administrators is also required.

b. The kindergarten at St. Joseph shows a promising enrollment for the 1987 school year. Efforts must continue to promote this and to see that kindergarten students remain in the school in succeeding years.

c. St. Mary School is beginning a kindergarten program in the fall of 1987. It remains to be seen what effect this will have. In order to be of help, students must be actively recruited. Parents with eligible children must be sought out, not only for kindergarten, but for other grades as well.

d. St. Mary School might wish to take another look at its tuition. They might ask, "Are we pricing ourselves out of business?" The school revenues consist of tuition and parish assessment. There seemed to be no indication of parish fund raising to help with the school budget directly. An adjustment of the tuition rate might well allow some families to enter the school who cannot now afford it. The school needs to consider those who cannot pay all or part of the tuition and provide some monetary fund for this purpose. From discussions, information seemed to indicate that there

are considerable numbers of children who could be attending the school.

3. It is recommended that if there is a problem at St. Mary Central in accommodating all those who wish to enroll, that this be investigated more thoroughly.

   a. If some space is needed, the school might look toward use of the church basement area which could accommodate a classroom, perhaps kindergarten.

   b. Other space could be found using buildings nearby (e.g., the Lutheran Church).

   c. If some relief is needed on a long-term basis, discussions could begin on the possible transfer of a parish from St. Mary Central to St. Joseph. Such a move should be carefully planned and discussed.

4. It is recommended that steps be taken to promote more dialogue between the Catholic Schools in Belmont County. The schools have a common goal and there are many areas in which they should be acting in concert. These are ways they can learn from each other. There are concerns common to all. One suggestion might be an Advisory Board made up of representatives of the five boards. Such a group could discuss, bring up, listen to, and make recommendations to the respective boards on issues of common concern. This is not to diminish in any way the autonomy of the local schools. Rather, it would promote greater understanding among the schools and their respective parishes. Topics of

common interest could be such things as: textbooks, tuition, fund raising, parish assessments, even consolidated purchasing, religious concerns, and many more. And, one of these could very well be the question of building reorganization should the times warrant such a consideration.

5. It is recommended that the contents of this report be distributed to the pastors and school administrators. It is further recommended that any decisions coming as a result of this study be delayed until the superintendent begins her duties. She should have the opportunity to react to the findings.

In closing, the consultants once again wish to thank everyone for their splendid cooperation.

APPENDIX

NOTES FROM MEETING WITH BELMONT COUNTY PASTORS

TOPIC: CONSOLIDATION

December 2, 1986

DATA FROM DR. HERMAN TORGE, UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON OF DAYTON - OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

ADVANTAGES OF 7-8 GRADE CONSOLIDATION

1) Better curriculum

2) Addition of labs to science programs

3) Music and Art programs

4) Sports programs in conjunction with high school

5) Music affiliated with high school

6) Teachers become specialized in subject areas rather than just being generalists

7) Use of one building for grades 7-8

8) Ability to treat students as young teens outside of an elementary atmosphere

DISADVANTAGES GIVEN BY PASTORS FOR CONSOLIDATION

1) Bridgeport will suffer by transporting 7 grades out of St. Joseph School

2) Bridgeport is just getting over the hurt and resentment over past consolidation - would hurt health of the parish in the future

3) Ibid - Martins Ferry - learn from past mistakes

4) Martins Ferry students will go to Martins Ferry Junior High and therefore move into Martins Ferry high school

5) Cutting out grades 7-8 will lost financial aid to K-6 schools

6) There will be fallout - people will also leave the Church

7) St. Joseph's building - not the best place for 7-8 grade...why not use St. John's school in Bellaire

8) 7 & 8 graders take leadership of an elementary school - the school will lose football spirit

9) Ability to have good liturgies will be lost

10) Interaction between teachers and principals will be a problem in a consolidation
- Martins Ferry principal will not be a part of a consolidation

11) Would not gain 7 classrooms

12) Problem of textbook replacement

13) How much money would be saved - schools would lose 2 teachers but have 3 assessments

14) Savings not much - would still have to maintain buildings and we will lost tuition
St. Mary's Martins Ferry will lost $30,000 in tuition

15) Salary must be examined. Each building has its own pay scale

16) Transportation - children will be on buses too long

17) Scheduling problem - Bellaire already has 3 bus schedules

a) Some children are already on the bus 1½ hours morning and evening each
b) Some have to get 3 buses

18) Accredidation standards (?)

19) Parents are already upset their children are traveling so far

20) State has eliminated standing on buses

21) The real problem seems to be St. Clairsville and Bridgeport

22) Fallacy - Belmont County children are our concerning - we can't solve the problem on a county basis

23) A lot of hurt still in Bridgeport over previous consolidation - hard on the pastor
It has taken 20 years to fix the situation

24) People will accept consolidation only if they are convinced

ADVANTAGES GIVEN BY PASTORS AND BISHOP FOR CONSOLIDATION

1) More specialized teachers - not generalists

2) Enrichment for gifted students from the high school

3) Better music and Art

4) Junior high sports program will be hooked into St. John's high school

5) Next fall not in concrete for 7 and 8 grade consolidation

6) Better curriculum

7) Quality education - 1 building

8) Treat children according to growth level

9) Coordinate curriculum with high school

10) Bishop does not want to be "faked out."

11) Question about time-line for consolidation...need 3 years

12) Dayton Study important to feed groups

13) What about 7 and 8th grade consolidation at St. John High School Building
The advantage would be 6 years with the same teachers in the same building because there is a lot of space.

SUMMARY

1) Slow up and do a study

2) Move into the future to see the possible consolidation as soon as possible

3) Location of junior high (?)

4) Time line

5) With a Dayton Study will consolidation help build faith growth(?)

6) Consult NCEA - would they recommend another group to do a study other than Dayton

7) All pastors agreed to go with a study

8) Committee of 4 priests set up to work with Gene on a Study and consolidation of 7 and 8th grade - committe consists of: George Coyne, Tom Magary, George Yontz and Stanley Zekas.

9) The Steubenville Register and local papers ..... public relations

MEETING WITH PRINCIPALS

FATHER GENE MULLETT, BISHOP AND PRINCIPALS

December 4, 1986

10:00 - 12:00 O.K. 6-10

DISADVANTAGES OF CONSOLIDATION

Will parents send students for building sake only

St. Joseph's school will get the bad end of the deal because K-6 will be uprooted and transported to St. Clairsville. The only reason St. Joseph's has 6 students in Kindergarten this year is because it started this year. Also, it is an all day kindergarten.

People react emotionally when a consolidation is thrust upon them

A major shake-up too quickly will cause a population loss. There should be a 25 - 30% drop which would have a devastating effect on the high school.

With a 7/8 Grade consolidation, St. Joseph's would get less Auxiliary Services money.

Schools do not lose children because of sports and music programs. The loss occurs after the reception of sacraments. The increase in Martins Ferry in grade 1 happened because of a bad situation at North school.

PROPOSALS

Will need to involve parents and the school boards in the study.

Factual information should be shared with people during the process and given out in a timely fashion.

It will take several years to sell the process.

It must be presented to parents.

Parents take kids out of schools because of demands i.e., homework

CONSIDERATIONS

St. Clairsville is in the process of doing their own study. They want to reach out to the community to see where they are.

Have to approach parents about moving grades K-6 from St. Joseph's to St. Clairsville.

Bishop does not want to be faked out. All involved have to work in good faith with the best interests of the children in mind. The Bishop has to see the bigger picture.

There is a need of an official statement from the Diocese as to exactly where we stand at present. A letter should be sent to pastors to be read from pulpits in all churches that would be effected. There has to be an official press release to quell rumors that schools will be closed in Belmont county.

The Junior High would need a school board

TUITION

St. Clairsville - $800
Martins Ferry - $500
Bridgeport - $600
Bellaire - $500

Parents will not pay 3 tuitions

What about a centralized tuition for 4 grade schools and high school

FACT

Consolidation will not happen in 1987-88 school year.

MINUTES OF ST. JOSEPH CENTRAL SCHOOL BOARD MEETING 01/19/87
BRIDGEPORT, OHIO

PRESENT — Father Rotolo, Father Yontz, Mrs. Chillog, Miss Howell, Mr. Williamson, Mr. Bellevage, Mr. Kloss, Mr. Shidell and Mrs. Forgacs.

ABSENT — Father Costlow, Father Mucha, Mr. Chillog, Mr. Ishmael, Mrs. Skocik, Mr. Galownia, Mr. Eble, Mr. Zambori and Mrs. Smolenak.

The meeting was opened with a prayer by Father Rotolo.

The minutes of the November 17, 1986, meeting were read by Mr. Williamson. The motion to accept the minutes as read was made by Mr. Shidell and seconded by Mr. Bellevage.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT — Miss Howell informed the board that a copy of job description for principal had been sent with the minutes of the November meeting. The Board agreed that the job description as listed in the Diocesion Handbook was appropriate for our school and no addition or deletions were made.

Parent-Teacher Conferences were held January 19, 1987.

The report cards will be handed out on Thursday, January 22nd.

The Eighth Grade has completed the Standarized Test which will be forwarded to the high School.

Kindergarten registration will be held on March 10th and 11th. There are estimated to be approximately twenty-five children who will register for kindergarten for next year. We now have a new student in kindergarten. This student will pay one half year tuition for the remainder of the school year.

Thursday - January 22nd is the anniversary of the Supreme Court decision to legalize abortion, therefore, Mass will be celebrated at 9:45 A.M. Thursday.

The University of Dayton has been chosen to conduct the study of schools in our area. The members of the board discussed this subject for some time and they were all in agreement that as part of the study the parents and teachers as well as school board members should be interviewed for input regarding said study.

Dayton Study for Belmont County Schools

The Office of Educational Services of the University of Dayton will conduct a study of Belmont County Catholic schools in the early part of 1987, according to an announcement by Bishop Albert H. Ottenweller and Acting Superintendent of Schools, Father Gene W. Mullett.

"Changes in population and a need to assess the curricula, with particular emphasis on science, music and art programs" were listed as reasons for the study.

Initiated after consultation with area pastors, the study will include St. John Central, Bellaire; St. Joseph Central, Bridgeport; St. Mary Central, Martins Ferry; St. Mary Central, St. Clairsville and St. John Central High School, Bellaire. No changes are projected for the 1987-88 academic year in the schools or in the use of school buildings.

The Catholic elementary schools of the Steubenville area were the subject of a similar study by the University of Dayton in 1983.

"Quality education for all students and the best use of school facilities is the ultimate goal of the study," Father Mullett said.